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10/575,436

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Jack L. Johnson

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EXAMINER

GUTMAN, HILARY L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3612

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/09/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/575,436 | Applicant(s) JOHNSON ET AL. | |
| | Examiner Hilary Gutman | Art Unit 3612 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 June 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26, 28, 29 and 34-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-26, 28 and 29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 34-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. This application contains claims 1-26 and 28-29 drawn to an invention nonelected without traverse in the reply filed on 1/5/09. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 34-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being clearly anticipated by Cowelchuk et al. (6,991,841).

Cowelchuk et al. disclose the claimed invention including a substrate 12 having a channel; a skin 16 having a protrusion 60, 70 coupled to the substrate by engagement of the protrusion with the channel; and a foam material 36 disposed between the skin and substrate wherein the skin and foam material form a cushioned region. The substrate includes a vacuum aperture 14 located in the channel. The outermost sides of the protrusions can be considered lateral edges of the skin. Therefore, the vacuum aperture extending through the substrate is

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located between a protrusion and a lateral edge. Furthermore, the protrusions are each located between the aperture and the lateral edge of the skin.

4. Claims 34, 37-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakai et al. (5,895,613).

Nakai et al. disclose the claimed invention including a substrate 13 having a channel extending between sidewalls 12; a skin 21 having a protrusion 22 coupled to the substrate by engagement of the protrusion with the channel; and a foam material P disposed between the skin and substrate wherein the skin and foam material form a cushioned region. The substrate includes a vacuum aperture 14 located in the channel. The vacuum aperture extends through the substrate and is located between the protrusion 22 and a lateral edge of the skin. The outermost sides of the protrusions 22 can be considered lateral edges of the skin. Therefore, the vacuum aperture extending through the substrate is located between a protrusion on the right side of Figure 1 and a lateral edge on the left side. Furthermore, the protrusions are each located between the aperture and the lateral edge of the skin.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various

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claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

7. Claims 34 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '283.

JP '283 discloses the claimed invention but shows the substrate having a protrusion and the skin having a channel. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have reversed the two components such that the protrusion is located on the skin and the channel is located on the substrate as an obvious expedient. The mere reversal of parts would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments filed 6/15/09 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that Cowelchuk et al and Nakai et al. disclose a component that relies entirely on the foam and/or molding process to secure the skin to the substrate rather than the engagement of a protrusion with a first wall and a second wall of a channel defined by the substrate. The examiner disagrees and believes that the protrusions 60, 70 of Cowelchuk et al. and the protrusion 22 of Nakai et al. engage the substrate as broadly recited and interpreted. Furthermore, the claim language does not preclude the engagement of the protrusion of the skin and the substrate after the foaming/molding process. Therefore, the examiner maintains the rejections with regard to these references set forth above.

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The rejections with regard to Bethell et al. have been removed and the arguments directed at this reference are hereby moot. Turning now to Nakai et al. applicant states that the side face or the protrusion 22 along with the elastic seal 25 becomes coupled to the sidewall 12 of the substrate 13 after the molding process. Therefore, the applicant has thus admitted the features are indeed engaged as recited and the examiner's rejection is hereby maintained.

With regard to Cowelchuk et al., the typographical error stating the rejection as a 102(b) has been corrected and replaced with the proper letter "(c)". Since applicant has currently refrained from submitting evidence overcoming the priority date of Cowelchuk et al., the rejection is maintained above.

With respect to the 103 art rejection of JP '283, here again applicant states that the foam and/or molding process is relied upon to secure the skin to the substrate. However, this does not preclude the protrusion from being engaged with the substrate as set forth in the rejection. The claim limitation requires only that the protrusion and substrate are coupled by engagement of the protrusion and substrate but does not recite the conditions of that engagement. More specifically, after the molding process are not the components coupled and engaged? The examiner maintains the rejection based on JP '283.

Conclusion

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO**

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MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hilary Gutman whose telephone number is 571-272-6662.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Dayoan can be reached on 571-272-6659. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Hilary Gutman/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3612